

THE OLD RELIGIONS OF KOREA

Slide lecture

By Sam and Eileen Moffett

1. (E. Coast Village). Early Western travelers in Korea commented in some surprise that it seemed to be a land without a religion.
2. (Rice terrace village). They found no temples in its towns and villages, no external signs of religion. They did not know that the temples had been banished by a Confucian dynasty to the hills.
3. (Topknot). When they asked a Korean about his religion, the usual answer was a shrug, "I have no religion". But that was an evasion...
4. (Woodland). What Westerners sometimes forget is that there are religions that need no temples. The earliest Korean religion was probably the worship of nature, animism.
5. (Mt. Sorak) They worshipped the spirits of the mountains. One is never out of sight of a mountain in Korea.
6. (Misty peaks). They could see the spirits rising like mists from the lofty peaks...
7. (So. Han near Yongwol). They felt the presence of the spirits in the rivers and the rocks...
8. (Brook). They were attracted and awed by the glint of moonlight dancing off the streams at night...
9. (Stone altars). So they built altars of stones out under the sky in the mountains along the streams...
10. (Dolmen). Back before recorded history began they put up massive slabs of rock called dolmens, perhaps for graves, perhaps for altars, or both. No one really knows.
11. (Tophats in line). But there are also the organized religions. These country gentlemen show by their walk and bearing that they are Confucianist. A Korean gentleman might say that he has no religion, but the way he walks and talks and thinks is governed by the Confucian proprieties.
12. (Women at temple). His wife, however, goes to a Buddhist temple. Korean religion is like a stool with three legs. The first leg is Confucianism - for men. The second is Buddhism. Buddhism is basically for women in Korea.
13. (Women praying). Even the gray-robed officiant in this picture is not a priest, that is a man; but a woman; a nun with shaven head, joining her prayers with that of a supplicant praying for a son.
14. (Devil post). But when the chips are down--when the family is in real trouble--it will usually turn neither to Confucius nor to Buddha, but to the gods and myriad spirits of the country's gut religion, animistic shamanism, which is the third leg of the stool.

And so, of the three layers, the oldest is shamanism;
then Buddhism, which came to Korea in 372 A.D,

then Confucianism, which overtook the influence of Buddhism in Korea beginning in about 1400 A.D.

15. (Maitreya). You will never understand Korean art, for instance, if you do not know Buddhism. This 8th century gilt-bronze Buddhist Messiah is a reminder that not all great art is Christian inspired.
16. (To-san wood-block). You will never understand Korean thought and behavior if you do not know the precepts of Confucius, as carved over 300 years ago on this wooden printing block.
17. (Shaman). And you will never understand the religious mind of Korea if you do not also recognize the pervasive power of the mudang (the sorceress); for shamanism has infiltrated all of Korea's religions. It is the Korean religious base. To put it another way, Korean religion is a blend of all three of the ancient worldviews.
18. (Clan heads). Each seems to answer only about one-third of the people's needs. Confucianism is concerned principally with personal and social relationships as determined by the male elders of the clan or institution.
19. (Woman at bier). But when death strikes, and the body of a husband is carried in colorful splendor to the grave, the wife in white mourning crouches weeping. It is human nature to reach out for explanations and comfort at such a time, not found in Confucianism. So it is to Buddhism they turn at death...
20. (Shaman). While for the immediate, practical necessities of life Koreans have turned to the shaman for health and wealth and luck; for good harvests and a high position; for help in making important decisions; for a pretty wife or a rich husband -- these things they believe the spirits control, and those who talk to spirits, the shamans.

BUDDHISM

21. (Seated monk). We'll begin with Buddhism - the Buddhist leg of the three-legged stool that is Korean religion. Begin with this monk chanting his prayers to the Cosmic Buddha (Vairocana).
22. (Praying monk). Korean Buddhism is northern (or Mahayana) Buddhism, the kind found also in China and Japan. It is as different from southern (or Hinayana) Buddhism as Christianity is from Mohammedanism. Contrast the quiet, gray dress of this Korean monk...
23. (Thai monks)...with the bright saffron robes of his southern cousins several thousand miles south in Bangkok, for example. The Buddhism of Southeast Asia (Hinayana or Theravada) is colorful, exotic and politically powerful.
24. (Thai temple). Its temples dominate the landscape all through the southeast from Burma and Thailand to Ceylon - baroque and gaudy as the robes.
25. (Korean temple). But in Korea the temples are hard to find. They were thrown out of the cities more than 500 years ago, when Buddhism had so corrupted the government that it fell before a new dynasty. Korean temples melt unobtrusively into the countryside.

26. (Pusoksa). They stand at the end of valleys, looking out across the ranges. This is one of the oldest and most beautiful: Pusoksa. One of its wooden buildings is more than 900 years old.
27. (Hermitage, Todongsa). Their hermitages are tucked away out of sight up long stream beds, purified by the clear, running water.
28. (Nahan images). There is another difference between northern and southern Buddhism, a theological difference. Northern Buddhism is a religion of many gods. But southern Buddhists have no god, nor do they believe, really, that people have souls to survive with any individuality.
29. (Hell gods). In north Asia, however, the souls of the Buddhist dead must face these gods of hell for judgment.
30. (Trinity). In some ways, the greatest figures of Korean Buddhism are not the Buddhas, but the bodhisattvas, on either side of the central Buddha in this trinity. A bodhisattva, like the one to whom this woman is reaching out for help, is a mediator, something like a medieval saint. A bodhisattva, unlike Buddha, postpones his own escape into nirvana to remain and help ordinary souls reach paradise.
31. (Kwan-yin). One of the most popular of the bodhisattvas (posal in Korean) is the goddess of mercy, called Kwan-sei-um posal in Korea. Some say she is the Buddha's wife who gave her life to helping others when her lord left her for higher things.
32. (White Buddha). In Korea, however, the goddess is more male than female and to Zen Buddhists she is neither or both. Here she is a male goddess of mercy. She has been called "the sexless guardian of the human race", and her worship, "the cult of half Asia". (C.N. Tay)
33. (Healing Buddha). Another popular bodhisattva is the Yaksa-yorae, the so-called Healing Buddha, or Emerald Buddha. Note the emerald green on top of his head instead of a crown. He often holds a medicine jar in his hand, and he heals all your diseases.
34. (Wood-block). Northern Buddhism also has more sacred books than southern Buddhism, often carved on wooden blocks for printing. Korea has the largest and most complete collection of the Buddhist scriptures in the world:
35. (Tripitaka). 1,600 books in 5000 volumes were carved on the 80,000 Korean magnolia wood blocks of the Tripitaka Koreana at Heinsa Temple. The king of Korea ordered this massive labor in the 11th and 13th centuries to earn him merit and make sure that the Lord Buddha would help him ward off invading armies from Manchuria. Works righteousness is engrained deep in the Buddhist mind.
36. (Temple painting). The Deeds of Buddha, one of the most popular of these sacred books, which is the traditional life of the saint, is often illustrated by 8 pictures, painted like Sunday School posters on the walls of Buddhist temples. Here is the first scene, the Incarnation. Note the white elephant in the gold circle at upper right...
37. (Incarnation). Here is a simpler painting of the same scene, with the elephant at the left. The date is about 500 B.C. The queen of a little mountain kingdom near Nepal sleeps, and dreams of a white elephant entering her womb. It is the moment of conception of the baby prince who was to become the Buddha.

38. (Suffering). We will skip to the third scene: and the prince's discovery of the universal fact of human suffering. The prince has been protected in the palace from all contact with the outside world, but one day as he stands in his chariot at the gate he sees a dead body wrapped in a white shroud carried past (lower left), and he is shocked into the discovery that human existence is suffering, the first of the 4 Noble Truths.

39. (Sky god). He turns to the gods of the four points of the universe. They will help him leave the pleasures of the palace to find the answer to the problem of human suffering. So, the King of the East, identified here by the guitar in his left hand, and his partners, the kings of North, South and West, each lift one foot of his white horse and carry him over the palace wall into the world.

40. (Enlightenment). The prince searches for the answer to suffering in a life of self-denial and asceticism, but it is all in vain. Then one day as he sits under a bodhi tree, sudden enlightenment comes like a stroke of green lightning from above. The answer is in the Four Noble Truths: (1) life is suffering; (2) suffering comes from desiring; (3) so, to get rid of suffering, stop desiring; and (4) to stop desire, follow the "8-fold path".

41. (Cliff Buddha). Thus the prince became the Buddha, which means "The Enlightened One". Buddha is a title, like Christ; not a name, like Jesus. The Buddha's personal name was Siddhartha; his family name, Gautama; and in Korea he is usually called Sokamuni (since he belonged to the Sakya, or warrior caste).

42. (Snails). Even in museums he attracts worshippers and offerings from people seeking blessing and merit. According to an ancient legend snails came to cover his shaven head and protect it from the hot sun. More sober scholars think those are just tight curls.

43. (Buddhas). But there are many Buddhas, white, yellow, green and gold. For after his death forms of the Buddha appear and reappear in many roles and many colors.

44. (Sokkuram). The most famous Buddha, perhaps, in Korea is the great stone Sakyamuni, in the Sokkuram cave grotto. It faces the Eastern Sea, and pilgrims say that the rays of the rising sun dancing off the waves at dawn make it appear as if the stone image is alive, his eyes opening and closing.

45. (Trinity). However, the Buddha is often represented as a trinity, a concept influenced perhaps from Nestorian Christians in 5th century Afghanistan. This is the classic Buddhist trinity. The cosmic Buddha in the center, eternal and unchangeable, is like God, the Father, of the Bible. On his right is the incarnate Buddha (Sakyamuni), the prince who became the Buddha, a parallel to Jesus, who became Man. On his left the mystical Loshana Buddha, the giver of bliss, something like the Holy Spirit.

46. (Amithaba). But even more popular than the classic Buddhas in Korea is the Amithaba Buddha, the Lord of Paradise. He rules the Happy Land where the ground is gold, and lotus flowers grow big as cart-wheels. (This is a thousand-year-old Amithaba Buddha from Kamsan-sa.)

47. (Funeral). As the body of the dead is carried to the grave, believers can remember that it isn't hard to get to paradise. Chant the Buddha's name--Amidapul, Amidapul, Amidapul--for only a week, or only a day if you concentrate--and when you die, as your body is taken to the grave...

48. (Priest). A Buddhist priest will walk in the procession chanting prayers.

49. (Andong Kim). And though your friends and relatives will gather in mourning white to pour out their grief at the grave, as at this large funeral of the mother of the head of the powerful Andong Kim clan...
50. (Boat). Your soul will not be there. You will already be on the way to the Happy Land, in the boat that Amithaba Buddha sends to take the faithful to his paradise.
51. (Hell). Unfortunately, there are always those who do not believe, and forget to pray. There is a hell for them, and demons to torture them. Gluttons and the greedy die like pigs on a sword in the devouring flames.
52. (Pulguksa). Buddhism is the oldest of the higher religions in Korea. This is its most famous temple, Pulguksa, near Kyongju, built in the 8th century when Kyongju, the capital of the Silla dynasty, was the fourth largest city in the world, after Constantinople, Baghdad and Chang'an.
53. (Semite). The figures of Buddha's disciples carved in relief on the walls of a grotto near Pulguksa are something of a mystery. This face is more Semitic than oriental. Some think it indicates Manichean influence from Persia. Augustine, you may remember, was a Manichee before he became Christian.
54. (Won Hyo). The greatest Buddhist priest in Korean history was Won Hyo. One night he slept in a cave, and thirsty in the night reached out for a container of water. He drank and went back to sleep. But in the morning he was horrified to see that what he had drunk from was a human skull. It was no cave, it was a grave with a rotting skeleton. He immediately became violently, retchingly ill. Then the thought struck him: why am I sick now? Why wasn't I sick when I drank the stuff? And suddenly, in a moment of enlightenment, he discovered the Son (or Zen) Buddhist truth that "Reality is in the mind". (Picture from Pun-hwang-sa)
55. (Cave). He went back to the simple cave in which he had been living as a monk, but thought to himself, "If reality is in the mind, it makes no difference whether I live in a cave or a palace". So he left the cave, married a princess, and lived in a palace. And he thought, "If reality is in the mind, it makes no difference whether I pray or drink wine". So he began to pray less and drink more. It may well have been the beginning of the ethical decline of Korean Buddhism - a decline that eventually corrupted and brought to an end the Koryo dynasty with which Buddhism was powerfully associated.
56. (Emille). Even the greatest and most beautiful of the Buddhist bells carries a tinge of corruption in the legends that surround it. This Emille bell, in Kyongju, is 1200 years old, 11 feet high, and is said to weigh 79 tons. It is probably the most beautiful great bell ever cast by human hands. But the legend of the casting is associated with a human sacrifice. A little girl had to be thrown into the molten bronze before it would cool without cracking.
57. (Monk praying). Whatever the reason, Buddhism fell. The monks in the temples still pray...
58. (Begging). And they earn merit by begging along the streets.
59. (Private ceremony). Sometimes they go out to put on private ceremonies for those who can afford them, bringing great paper Buddhas with them, for the dances and chants.
60. (Volleyball). And sometimes they relax in a game of volleyball.

61. (Ruins). But the great days of Korean Buddhism are over. You will find more tourists in the temples today than worshipers. Buddhism fell 600 years ago with the Koryo dynasty and has never been able to regain its former influence. The next dynasty was Confucian.

CONFUCIANISM

62. (Man). Unlike Buddhism, with its many gods, the Confucianist has no god. His concern is with man, and man's relations to man. It is a man's religion.

63. (Family heads). Actually it is not much of a religion as such at all. Again unlike Buddhism, its emphasis is not on worship, but on social relationships and proper ceremony--as when the heads of the clans gather at the family shrine to pay their respects to the clan's founder.

64. (Tablet). There is a spirit tablet to Confucius in Confucian temples, and his spirit is honored there. The tablet even has a hole in the back, some say for carrying, some say for the spirit to get in and out. But Confucius himself was somewhat skeptical of spirits.

65. (Bows). His followers still bow and prostrate themselves in prayer before him, but Confucius was not much for prayer, either. As he lay dying in 479 B.C. a disciple asked permission to pray. "Is that the thing to do?" asked Confucius. "Yes," the disciple said. "It's the usual thing." And Confucius only smiled and said, "My kind of praying was done long ago."

66. (School). His kind of praying was the reform of human society by education. His symbol is the school, not the temple. The old Confucian schools like this were once the foundations of Korean education.

67. (2 gentlemen). In their day, the schools taught the 5 Human Relationships, which are the foundation of Confucian Society. Confucianism is a vertical society. The closest it ever comes to equality is in the relationship of friend to friend. But even there the older of the two takes priority.

68. (3 friends). Loyalty to friends is far more important in Confucian ethics than such cold abstractions as honesty.

69. (Feast). As loyal friends, Confucian gentlemen would gather to enjoy themselves in eating and drinking, in playing chess, and writing poetry.

70. (Brothers). A second of the 5 human relationships is that between older and younger brother. Order in society depends on order in the family.

71. (Wedding). The third is the relationship between husband and wife. Woman's place is in loyalty to her husband and his family. Her importance is in relation to the production of sons who are the family security both for this life and the next.

72. (Bowling). And as she grows older, household chores are transferred to the new daughter-in-law, who begins married life with a deep bow to her husband's mother.

73. (Washing). Woman is definitely inferior. She is lower than man. While the woman beats the dirt out of the family laundry on a rock, behind her on the road, the man in immaculate white watches from a proper distance.
74. (Baskets). Women carry many of the loads.
75. (Man by river). A gentleman can relax, thinking high thoughts. This is the Confucian way.
76. (Father and son). The fourth relationship is that between father and son; for order in society depends on a proper balance of the generations. It is the old who rule -- or rest, if they wish. The young must obey and serve.
77. (Filial tablet). Stone tablets to filial sons are found beside the road leading to many a country village. They are honored for proving by their deeds their respect for and service to their fathers.
78. (Hahwae Yu). The father is without question the head of the house. This dignified gentleman, the head of the famous Hahwae Yu clan, stands at the doorway of his 400-year-old home, a national treasure.
79. (Tombstones). Fathers, however, eventually die. Nevertheless, the family lives on. A Confucian family lives in the conscious presence, constantly celebrated of its ancestors.
80. (3 clan tablets). One of the rarest sights I have ever seen was the ceremony of moving the ancestral tablets (one of them is in the black box carried by the man in the center). The three principal clans of the city of Andong joined to bring the tablets from three separate sites in the hills.
81. (3 clan procession, fields). They moved in long procession down the valleys, all the men of the three clans escorting the sacred tablets toward the city, where a new joint shrine had been prepared to receive them.
82. (Procession, Andong). Thus they entered the town, still in file, wearing their horsehair hats with dignity; the men of the great clans of Andong Kim (once the most powerful in the land), Andong Chang and Andong Kwun.
83. (Yi Taejo). The highest authority of all in Confucianism under the nebulous mandate of heaven, was the throne. This is the ancestral portrait of Yi Taejo, founder of the Yi dynasty in 1392. The pinnacle of the five Confucian relationships is the relationship of obedience of the subject to the King and does much to explain the powerful role assumed by and granted to the head of state even today.
84. (Tablet house). The Yi family ruled Korea for 500 years, down into the 20th century. Its home was Chonju, in southwest Korea, where the family tablet house still stands.
85. (Three Yi). Once a year the head of the Yi family, who is now Mr. Yi Kyu, last royal prince of the dynasty and son of the late Crown Prince, together with the heads of the Yi Dynasty Association, make a ceremonial visit to the family shrine to honor the founder of the line, Yi Taejo.
86. (Kneeling). They kneel at the entrance, then proceed in to bow before the tablet of his grandfather (some 27 generations removed).

87. Yi tablets). These are clan tablets and this is a family duty.
88. (Chong-myo). The royal tablets of the same reigning family are housed on a grander scale in the tablet shrine of the Changdok Palace in Seoul. The main building contains rooms for the tablets of kings who bore direct heirs to the throne. Each king's room contains his tablet, his seal and his favorite books.
89. (Tablets). Once a year the tablets are venerated with memorial honors. Ceremonial vessels are placed before the 19 shrines, all built in 1395 at the beginning of the Yi dynasty.
90. (Kings). On the left, in this picture taken about 1905, are the last three kings of the dynasty. And it makes me wonder a little about the power of Korean geomancers and their claims to foresee the future, to note that in 1970 when the last crown prince was posthumously made king and the dynasty came to an end, it had produced exactly 19 kings with direct heirs, one for each of the cubicles built 600 years before.
91. (Yi Kyu). Here, Mr. Yi Kyu, the son of that last king who never ruled, officiates at the royal ceremony, not just as head of the family, as in the rites at Chonju, but representing in the old Confucian pattern, the entire nation.
92. (Burning prayers). And when it is all over, attendants send official messages to the spirits of the kings, burning them in this container so that the smoke will ascend to heaven, informing the royal ancestors that the rites have been properly observed for another year, and they may rest in peace so that the kingdom, too, may have peace.
93. (Kneeling). Twice a year at the Confucian Temple on the campus of the old Confucian University in Seoul (Songgyun'gwan) another rare ceremony may be seen: the spring and autumn rites, the sacrifice to Confucius on the ancestor-worshipping day (sang-jong-il) of the 2nd and 8th lunar months.
94. (Dance). Nowhere else in the world today can you see the old Confucian rituals and dances performed so authentically, the traditions handed down for centuries. Students perform the stylized civil and military dances, wearing black hats as civil officials, and red ones as military.
95. (Elders). Then a group of chosen elders - heads of clans or government officials - file slowly in to the temple. They enter the sacred place to offer the sacrifices of wine and food before "the five holy ones" - Confucius and his four major disciples: (Mencius, Szu-tsu, Tseng-tsu and Yuen-tsu).
96. (Tosan). Confucian thought reached its apex in the 16th century in the writing of Yi T'oegye (1501-70). His school and study are still preserved as a national shrine in Tosan, just outside of Andong.
97. (Woodblock). In his debates with other scholars (notably Yi I, or "Yulgok"), this great Confucian thinker wrestled with the doctrine of the yi and the ki, the two cosmic forces of the universe, which could be termed, perhaps, roughly parallel to theological debate on the relationship of matter and spirit. In reaching his own conclusions he came closer to a doctrine of a personal God than any Confucian scholar before or since. But, as always in Confucianism, the ethical dimension remained primary. This is a print from a woodblock rubbing of his own calligraphy. It could be translated "Even when alone be

circumspect", or paraphrased, "Think no evil".

98. (Song Si-Ryol). But the downfall of Confucianism was its factionalism. This poor gentleman, Song Si Ryol, was a loser. A rival school trapped him into a debate over the length of the proper period of mourning for a dowager queen. They said 27 months. He said 12 was enough. And for this patent disrespect to royalty he was banished from the court.

99. (Yoju shrine). Eventually he was forced to commit suicide, and his lonely shrine near Yoju mourns his downfall and stands as a symbol of the end of Confucian power.

SHAMANISM

100. (Cheju-do spirit stone). Korea has never been completely satisfied either by the clear, cold inadequacies of Confucianism or the warmer mists of Buddhism. She has always turned, unfulfilled and a little embarrassed to something darker and more primitive...

101. (Female posts). ...like these female spirit posts guarding a village. The characters read: "The great female general of all under the earth."

102. (Male posts). Across the road stands a row of male spirit posts, "the great general of all under the heavens." These symbols of the spirits, reenforced by shamanism, represent, I am convinced, the core of the Korean religious mind.

103. (Spirit tree). Its roots are animistic--a belief in the supernatural powers of natural things. Trees, for instance. It doesn't take much imagination to see the spirit writhing to get out of this gnarled old trunk.

104. (Straw rope). To keep him in, and protect the nearby village, the local people have thrown a straw rope around the whole grove.

105. (Fishing village). Fishing villages are particularly superstitious. Their frail boats are vulnerable to the mighty forces of nature, the power of wind and wave.

106. (Entrance). So this fishing village protects itself with both a spirit tree and a demon post to guard the entrance into town.

107. (Post). Usually a new spirit post is erected each year and placed next to the older ones. But this one must be particularly powerful. It has obviously suffered from years of exposure but stands guard year after year.

108. (Fetish). But animistic fears are not limited to the villages. I picked up this spirit fetish on a major street just outside metropolitan Seoul. It is a charm to rid the house of disease, made in the image of a sick child to tempt the spirit out of the human body and into the doll. Often paper money is tucked into the straw. Then the doll is thrown out into the street in the hope that someone more greedy for money than fearful of the spirit, will pick up both the doll and the spirit causing the disease.

109. (Crown). From beggars to kings, few in Korea have been untouched by the primitive emotions of animistic Shamanism. Art historians, studying the great gold crowns of ancient Silla, with their suggestions of antler horns and totems, theorize that the first kings may have been glorified tribal shamans.

110. (Spirit walk). Even the royal tombs of the Yi dynasty, Confucian though it was, have their spirit walks, so that the royal spirits may come in dignity from their graves to the shrines below and taste the offerings.

111. (3 panels). Buddhism is even more infiltrated with shamanist practices than Confucianism. Here is a corner of a Buddhist temple, but not one of these pictures is Buddhist. They are all shamanist, tainted with Taoism. The one on the left is the shrine of the Seven Stars; the one on the right is the shrine of the Lonely Sage, and in the center, is the strongly animist shrine of the Old Man of the Mountain.

112. (Doksong). Doksong, the Lonely Sage, is the spirit much loved by school boys and politicians. He has power to help pass examinations and rise to high office.

113. (Mountain god). But the most powerful symbol of victory over evil spirits is the tiger. The most popular spot in every Buddhist temple is the shrine of the mountain god, who always has a tiger by his side. He is the spirit of the hills behind the village and the temple. He knows the people and their needs. And the people feel they know him.

114. (Mountain god shrine). Sometimes this Old Man of the Mountain even has a separate building on the temple compound all to himself. If you ask why he is more popular than the Buddha, perhaps it is because the Buddha seems remote. After all, he was a foreigner. He was Indian. But the Old Man of the Mountain is strictly local.

115. (Worshiper). So it is to the Old Man of the Mountain that the women pray for sons, lighting the candles and lifting their arms in earnest prayers.

116. (Red dirt-close-up). There are small spirits, too, that run along the ground. And they must also be reckoned with. Around this Buddhist temple at regular intervals, little mounds of red earth have been placed.

117. (Dirt mounds). These little mounds of dirt keep out the irritating mischievous spirits that creep up on you, blow dust in the priests eyes, and disturb meditations. They also cause itching and overturn pots and pans.

118. (Buddha & turtle). In the village, where life is really lived, the Buddha shrinks drastically in size, and is completely overwhelmed by the spirits. In the temples, Buddha is large and serene and golden. But here he is overshadowed by the spirit of the turtle, which brings long life. The religion of the people is not really Buddhism, it is animistic-shamanism.

119. (Well shrine). I am not even sure that this is a Buddha at all by the village well. Larger and cruder behind the little image loom the tiger, his white teeth gleaming at the left, and the snake (or dragon) beneath him, and a fierce god with a long white sword, and the turtle, again, on the right. These are the gods the villagers understand.

120. (Rock pile). There seems to be a special affinity between the spirits and rocks. The higher the stones can be piled without falling, the nearer the prayers come to the spirits whom the worshippers seek.
121. (Rock shrine). One of the most elaborate spirit rock shrines in all Korea, I think, is this at the base of Horse Ear Mountain (Ma-i-san), near Chonju in the southwest. A man gave his entire adult life to the building of ever higher prayer spires to impress the spirits.
122. (Mudang). But the heart of Korea's folk religion revolves not around the rocks, but around the sorceress (mudang) - the specially chosen one who has established a personal relationship with the world of the spirits.
123. (Shaman dwelling). The shaman mudangs have no settled site or temple for their ceremonies, but they may have altars in their homes. The flag proclaims this low shack in front to be a sorceress's home. We were amused by the legend on the flag. Today even mudangs must be relevant: the characters on the flag read: "Anti-communist spiritual association".
124. (Altar). More often the mudangs go where they are called, setting up their altars and performing their ceremonies in homes, in boats or in neighborhoods to ward off or drive off unwanted and malevolent spirits. Or, as here, to call down good spirits at the ground-breaking for a new house about 100 yards away from our home. Note the pig's head in the center of the table.
125. (Kyeryong-san flags). Usually the ceremonies are for individuals or single families. Sometimes, though, a Kut will be held for the whole village. Once a year at Sindo-an, at the foot of the sacred mountain, Kyeryongsan, a whole coven of mudangs gather under their flags and poles for a feverish, mass ceremony of whirling dances and incantations.
126. (Dragon flag). No one dares to touch the flags, which are left flapping forlornly in the breeze all year until the next kut. But we brought one home. And it carried with it such associations of power and fear that even a Christian cleaning woman was afraid of it.
127. (Kut crowd). One day, visiting a resettlement area, I came upon this crowd gathering around the beginning of a shamanist kut, a special one as it turned out: the initiation ceremony of a new mudang (sorceress).
128. (Mudang). The girl in the red robes had apparently been sick and delirious. This is often taken to be the sign of special calling to the profession of the sorceress. As she recovers, she is brought out and dressed in the red robes of the mudang.
129. (Pine branch). A pine branch is placed in her hand. An assistant beats the cymbals incessantly, calling the spirits and inducing the trance. A tremor moves through the body of the girl, and the branch begins to shake. This is the sign that the spirit has come. Then the mudang begins to dance uncontrollably. She has been swept into her association with the spirit world.
130. (Hut). Afterward she is led into the rude little shack for more of the initiation ceremony, too secret for explanation to outsiders.

131. (Fortune teller). There is a whole world of semi-religious practices and beliefs more or less related to the underlying animistic-shamanism of Korea. Fortune telling, for example, only distantly relates itself to the powers of the spirit world, but the connection is there. This practitioner stresses more the significance of the shape of the face and head as he tells an inquirer what kind of young woman he should look for for a propitious marriage.
132. (2nd fortune teller). Others may deal with the power of written characters, as in a name; or look to the stars that shape an individual's fortune from the moment of birth. This, perhaps, is not unlike the common folk religion in America.
133. (Symbol). Beneath it all is the deeply-held belief that unseen spiritual and cosmic forces of the universe are always at work, exerting their arcane influences on human fate. When properly balanced, as in this symbol of the triune harmony of heaven, earth and the human spirit, then all is well and one is physically and spiritually at peace.
134. (Book of Changes--Yok-kyong). The balancing interplay of these mysterious powers, (Um and Yang), is most definitively, but most ambiguously described in the Book of Changes (called I Ching in Chinese). It is one of the five famous Confucian classics. "I wish I could live 50 more years", Confucius said at the end of his life. "I would spend them studying the Book of Changes." A strange fascination he had with a book of magic; for, essentially this book is a fortune-telling manual.
135. (Seal). Whether studied by philosophers or misused by shamans, the Book of Changes is one of the most influential books ever written. My husband counts among his treasures this copy owned by a famous 18th-century Korean scholar, Chung Yak-Jong. But look again at his personal seal. This man, a member of one of the greatest families of Confucian scholars Korea ever produced, was brought to the Christian faith by early Roman Catholic missionaries. His conversion cost him his life. He was beheaded in 1801, one of the first Christian martyrs in Korea.

And that marked the beginning of a new faith in Korea older than all the others in its roots. But that is another story, although it is a story I am even more eager to tell you.

THE OLD RELIGIONS OF KOREA

Slide lecture

By Sam and Eileen Moffett

1. (E. Coast Village). Early Western travelers in Korea commented in some surprise that it seemed to be a land without a religion.
2. (Rice terrace village). They found no temples in its towns and villages, no external signs of religion. They did not know that the temples had been banished by a Confucian dynasty to the hills.
3. (Topknot). When they asked a Korean about his religion, the usual answer was a shrug, "I have no religion". But that was an evasion...
4. (Woodland). What Westerners sometimes forget is that there are religions that need no temples. The earliest Korean religion was probably the worship of nature, animism.
5. (Mt. Sorak) They worshipped the spirits of the mountains. One is never out of sight of a mountain in Korea.
6. (Misty peaks). They could see the spirits rising like mists from the lofty peaks...
7. (So. Han near Yongwol). They felt the presence of the spirits in the rivers and the rocks...
8. (Brook). They were attracted and awed by the glint of moonlight dancing off the streams at night...
9. (Stone altars). So they built altars of stones out under the sky in the mountains along the streams...
10. (Dolmen). Back before recorded history began they put up massive slabs of rock called dolmens, perhaps for graves, perhaps for altars, or both. No one really knows.
11. (Tophats in line). But there are also the organized religions. These country gentlemen show by their walk and bearing that they are Confucianist. A Korean gentleman might say that he has no religion, but the way he walks and talks and thinks is governed by the Confucian proprieties.
12. (Women at temple). His wife, however, goes to a Buddhist temple. Korean religion is like a stool with three legs. The first leg is Confucianism - for men. The second is Buddhism. Buddhism is basically for women in Korea.

13. (Women praying). Even the gray-robed officiant in this picture is not a priest, that is a man; but a woman; a nun with shaven head, joining her prayers with that of a supplicant praying for a son.

14. (Devil post). But when the chips are down--when the family is in real trouble--it will usually turn neither to Confucius nor to Buddha, but to the gods and myriad spirits of the country's gut religion, animistic shamanism, which is the third leg of the stool.

The oldest of the three layers is shamanism, which came from Manchuria so early that its beginnings are lost in the mists of history.

Buddhism followed, coming to Korea near the end of the 4th century (372 A.D.).

And finally, Confucianism, which came at the end of the 9th century - and for a while, beginning at the end of the 14th, nearly displaced Buddhism.

15. (Maitreya). You will never understand Korean art if you do not know Buddhism. This 8th century gilt-bronze Buddhist Messiah is a reminder that not all great art is Christian inspired.

16. (To-san wood-block). And you will never understand Korean thought and behavior if you don't know the precepts of Confucius, as carved over 300 years ago on this wooden printing block.

17. (Shaman). And you will never even begin to understand the mind of Korea if you do not recognize the pervasive power of the mudang (the sorceress); for shamanism has infiltrated all of Korea's religions. It is the Korean religious base. To put it another way, Korean religion is a blend of all three of the ancient worldviews.

18. (Clan heads). Each seems to answer only about one-third of the people's needs. Confucianism is concerned principally with personal and social relationships as determined by the male elders of the clan or institution.

19. (Woman at bier). But when death strikes, and the body of a husband is carried in colorful splendor to the grave, the wife in white mourning crouches weeping. It is human nature to reach out for explanations and comfort at such a time, not found in Confucianism. So it is to Buddhism they turn at death...

20. (Shaman). While for the immediate, practical necessities of life Koreans have turned to the shaman for health and wealth and luck; for good harvests and a high position; for help in making important decisions; for a pretty wife or a rich husband -- these things they believe the spirits control, and those who talk to spirits, the shamans.

BUDDHISM

21. (Seated monk). We'll begin with Buddhism - the Buddhist leg of the three-legged stool that is Korean religion. Begin with this monk chanting his prayers to the Cosmic Buddha (Vairocana).
22. (Praying monk). Korean Buddhism is northern (or Mahayana) Buddhism, the kind found also in China and Japan. It is as different from southern (or Hinayana) Buddhism as Christianity is from Mohammedanism. Contrast the quiet, gray dress of this Korean monk...
23. (Thai monks)...with the bright saffron robes of his southern cousins several thousand miles south in Bangkok, for example. The Buddhism of Southeast Asia (Hinayana or Theravada) is colorful, exotic and politically powerful.
24. (Thai temple). Its temples dominate the landscape all through the southeast from Burma and Thailand to Ceylon - baroque and gaudy as the robes.
25. (Korean temple). But in Korea the temples are hard to find. They were thrown out of the cities more than 500 years ago, when Buddhism had so corrupted the government that it fell before a new dynasty. Korean temples melt unobtrusively into the countryside.
26. (Pusoksa). They stand at the end of valleys, looking out across the ranges. This is one of the oldest and most beautiful: Pusoksa. One of its wooden buildings is more than 900 years old.
27. (Hermitage, Todongsa). Their hermitages are tucked away out of sight up long stream beds, purified by the clear, running water.
28. (Nahan images). There is another difference between northern and southern Buddhism, a theological difference. Northern Buddhism is a religion of many gods. But southern Buddhists have no god, nor do they believe, really, that people have souls to survive with any individuality.
29. (Hell gods). In north Asia, however, the souls of the Buddhist dead must face these gods of hell for judgment.
30. (Trinity). In some ways, the greatest figures of Korean Buddhism are not the Buddhas, but the bodhisattvas, on either side of the central Buddha in this trinity. A bodhisattva, like the one to whom this woman is reaching out for help, is a mediator, something like a medieval saint. A bodhisattva, unlike Buddha, postpones his own escape into nirvana to remain and help ordinary souls reach paradise.
31. (Kwan-yin). One of the most popular of the bodhisattvas (posal in Korean) is the goddess of mercy, called Kwan-sei-um posal in Korea. Some say she is the Buddha's wife who gave her life to helping others

when her lord left her for higher things.

32. (White Buddha). In Korea, however, the goddess is more male than female and to Zen Buddhists she is neither or both. Here she is a male goddess of mercy. She has been called "the sexless guardian of the human race", and her worship, "the cult of half Asia". (C.N. Tay)

33. (Healing Buddha). Another popular bodhisattva is the Yaksa-yorae, the so-called Healing Buddha, or Emerald Buddha. Note the emerald green on top of his head instead of a crown. He often holds a medicine jar in his hand, and he heals all your diseases.

34. (Wood-block). Northern Buddhism also has more sacred books than southern Buddhism, often carved on wooden blocks for printing. Korea has the largest and most complete collection of the Buddhist scriptures in the world:

35. (Tripitaka). 1,600 books in 5000 volumes were carved on the 80,000 Korean magnolia wood blocks of the Tripitaka Koreana at Heinsa Temple. The kind of Korea ordered this massive labor in the 11th and 13th centuries to earn him merit and make sure that the Lord Buddha would help him ward off invading armies from Manchuria. Works righteousness is engrained deep in the Buddhist mind.

36. (Temple painting). The Deeds of Buddha, one of the most popular of these sacred books, which is the traditional life of the saint, is often illustrated by 8 pictures, painted like Sunday School posters on the walls of Buddhist temples. Here is the first scene, the Incarnation. Note the white elephant in the gold circle at upper right...

37. (Incarnation). Here is a simpler painting of the same scene, with the elephant at the left. The date is about 500 B.C. The queen of a little mountain kingdom near Nepal sleeps, and dreams of a white elephant entering her womb. It is the moment of conception of the baby prince who was to become the Buddha.

38. (Suffering). We will skip to the third scene: and the prince's discovery of the universal fact of human suffering. The prince has been protected in the palace from all contact with the outside world, but one day as he stands in his chariot at the gate he sees a dead body wrapped in a white shroud carried past (lower left), and he is shocked into the discovery that human existence is suffering, the first of the 4 Noble Truths.

39. (Sky god). He turns to the gods of the four points of the universe. They will help him leave the pleasures of the palace to find the answer to the problem of human suffering. So, the King of the East, identified here by the guitar in his left hand, and his partners, the kings of North, South and West, each lift one foot of his white horse and carry him over the palace wall into the world.

40. (Enlightenment). The prince searches for the answer to suffering in a life of self-denial and asceticism, but it is all in vain. Then one day as he sits under a bodhi tree, sudden enlightenment comes like a stroke of green lightning from above. The answer is in the Four Noble Truths: (1) life is suffering; (2) suffering comes from desiring; (3) so, to get rid of suffering, stop desiring; and (4) to stop desire, follow the "8-fold path".
41. (Cliff Buddha). Thus the prince became the Buddha, which means "The Enlightened One". Buddha is a title, like Christ; not a name, like Jesus. The Buddha's personal name was Siddhartha; his family name, Gautama; and in Korea he is usually called Sokamuni (since he belonged to the Sakya, or warrior caste).
42. (|Snails). Even in museums he attracts worshippers and offerings from people seeking blessing and merit. According to an ancient legend snails came to cover his shaven head and protect it from the hot sun. More sober scholars think those are just tight curls.
43. (Buddhas). But there are many Buddhas, white, yellow, green and gold. For after his death forms of the Buddha appear and reappear in many roles and many colors.
44. (Sokkuram). The most famous Buddha, perhaps, in Korea is the great stone Sakyamuni, in the Sokkuram cave grotto.1 It faces the Eastern Sea, and pilgrims say that the rays of the rising sun dancing off the waves at dawn make it appear as if the stone image is alive, his eyes opening and closing.
45. (Trinity). However, the Buddha is often represented as a trinity, a concept borrowed perhaps from Nestorian Christians in 5th century Afghanistan. This is the classic Buddhist trinity. The cosmic Buddha in the center, eternal and unchangeable, is like God, the Father, of the Bible. On his right is the incarnate Buddha (Sakyamuni), the prince who became the Buddha, a parallel to Jesus, who became Man. On his left the mystical Loshana Buddha, the giver of bliss, something like the Holy Spirit.
46. (Amithaba). But even more popular than the classic Buddhas in Korea is the Amithaba Buddha, the Lord of Paradise. He rules the Happy Land where the ground is gold, and lotus flowers grow big as cart-wheels. (This is a thousand-year-old Amithaba Buddha from Kamsan-sa.)
47. (Funeral). As the body of the dead is carried to the grave, believers can remember that it isn't hard to get to paradise. Chant the Buddha's name--Amidapul, Amidapul, Amidapul--for only a week, or only a day if you concentrate--and when you die, as your body is taken to the grave...
48. (Priest). A Buddhist priest will walk in the procession chanting prayers.

49. (Andong Kim). And though your friends and relatives will gather in mourning white to pour out their grief at the grave, as at this large funeral of the mother of the head of the powerful Andong Kim clan...

50. (Boat). Your soul will not be there. You will already be on the way to the Happy Land, in the boat that Amithaba Buddha sends to take the faithful to his paradise.

51. (Hell). Unfortunately, there are always those who do not believe, and forget to pray. There is a hell for them, and demons to torture them. Gluttons and the greedy die like pigs on a sword in the devouring flames.

52. (Pulguksa). Buddhism is the oldest of the higher religions in Korea. This is its most famous temple, Pulguksa, near Kyongju, built in the 8th century when Kyongju, the capital of the Silla dynasty, was the fourth largest city in the world, after Constantinople, Baghdad and Chang'an.

53. (Semite). The figures of Buddha's disciples carved in relief on the walls of a grotto near Pulguksa are something of a mystery. This face is more Semitic than oriental. Some think it indicates Manichaeism influence from Persia. Augustine, you may remember, was a Manichee before he became Christian.

54. (Won Hyo). The greatest Buddhist priest in Korean history was Won Hyo. One night he slept in a cave, and thirsty in the night reached out for a container of water. He drank and went back to sleep. But in the morning he was horrified to see that what he had drunk from was a human skull. It was no cave, it was a grave with a rotting skeleton. He immediately became violently, retchingly ill. Then the thought struck him: why am I sick now? Why wasn't I sick when I drank the stuff? And suddenly, in a moment of enlightenment, he discovered the Son (or Zen) Buddhist truth that "Reality is in the mind".

55. (Cave). He went back to the simple cave in which he had been living as a monk, but thought to himself, "If reality is in the mind, it makes no difference whether I live in a cave or a palace". So he left the cave, married a princess, and lived in a palace. And he thought, "If reality is in the mind, it makes no difference whether I pray or drink wine". So he began to pray less and drink more. It may well have been the beginning of the ethical decline of Korean Buddhism - a decline that eventually corrupted and brought to an end the Koryo dynasty with which Buddhism was powerfully associated.

56. (Emille). Even the greatest and most beautiful of the Buddhist bells carries a tinge of corruption in the legends that surround it. This Emille bell, in Kyongju, is 1200 years old, 11 feet high, and is said to weigh 79 tons. It is probably the most beautiful great bell ever cast by human hands. But the legend of the casting is associated with a human sacrifice. A little girl had to be thrown into the molten

bronze before it would cool without cracking.

57. (Monk praying). Whatever the reason, Buddhism fell. The monks in the temples still pray...

58. (Begging). And they earn merit by begging along the streets.

59. (Private ceremony). Sometimes they go out to put on private ceremonies for those who can afford them, bringing great paper Buddhas with them, for the dances and chants.

60. (Volleyball). And sometimes they relax in a game of volleyball.

61. (Ruins). But the great days of Korean Buddhism are over. You will find more tourists in the temples today than worshipers. Buddhism fell 600 years ago with the Koryo dynasty and has never been able to regain its former influence. The next dynasty was Confucian.

CONFUCIANISM

62. (Man). Unlike Buddhism, with its many gods, the Confucianist has no god. His concern is with man, and man's relations to man. It is a man's religion.

63. (Family heads). Actually it is not much of a religion as such at all. Again unlike Buddhism, its emphasis is not on worship, but on social relationships and proper ceremony--as when the heads of the clans gather at the family shrine to pay their respects to the clan's founder.

64. (Tablet). There is a spirit tablet to Confucius in Confucian temples, and his spirit is honored there. The tablet even has a hole in the back, some say for carrying, some say for the spirit to get in and out. But Confucius himself was somewhat skeptical of spirits.

65. (Bows). His followers still bow and prostrate themselves in prayer before him, but Confucius was not much for prayer, either. As he lay dying in 479 B.C. a disciple asked permission to pray. "Is that the thing to do?" asked Confucius. "Yes," the disciple said. "It's the usual thing." And Confucius only smiled and said, "My kind of praying was done long ago."

66. (School). His kind of praying was the reform of human society by education. His symbol is the school, not the temple. The old Confucian schools like this were once the foundations of Korean education.

67. (2 gentlemen). In their day, the schools taught the 5 Human Relationships, which are the foundation of Confucian Society. Confucianism is a vertical society. The closest it ever comes to equality is in the relationship of friend to friend. But even there the older of the two takes priority.
68. (3 friends). Loyalty to friends is far more important in Confucian ethics than such cold abstractions as honesty.
69. (Feast). As loyal friends, Confucian gentlemen would gather to enjoy themselves in eating and drinking, in playing chess, and writing poetry.
70. (Brothers). A second of the 5 human relationships is that between older and younger brother. Order in society depends on order in the family.
71. (Wedding). The third is the relationship between husband and wife. Woman's place is in loyalty to her husband and his family. Her importance is in relation to the production of sons who are the family security both for this life and the next.
72. (Bowing). And as she grows older, household chores are transferred to the new daughter-in-law, who begins married life with a deep bow to her husband's mother.
73. (Washing). Woman is definitely inferior. She is lower than man. While the woman beats the dirt out of the family laundry on a rock, behind her on the road, the man in immaculate white watches from a proper distance.
74. (Baskets). Women carry many of the loads.
75. (Man by river). A gentleman can relax, thinking high thoughts. This is the Confucian way.
76. (Father and son). The fourth relationship is that between father and son; for order in society depends on a proper balance of the generations. It is the old who rule -- or rest, if they wish. The young must obey and serve.
77. (Filial tablet). Stone tablets to filial sons are found beside the road leading to many a country village. They are honored for proving by their deeds their respect for and service to their fathers.
78. (Hahwae Yu). The father is without question the head of the house. This dignified gentleman, the head of the famous Hahwae Yu clan, stands at the doorway of his 400-year-old home, a national treasure.

79. (Tombstones). Fathers, however, eventually die. Nevertheless, the family lives on. A Confucian family lives in the conscious presence, constantly celebrated of its ancestors.
80. (3 clan tablets). One of the rarest sights I have ever seen was the ceremony of moving the ancestral tablets (one of them is in the black box carried by the man in the center). The three principal clans of the city of Andong joined to bring the tablets from three separate sites in the hills.
81. (3 clan procession, fields). They moved in long procession down the valleys, all the men of the three clans escorting the sacred tablets toward the city, where a new joint shrine had been prepared to receive them.
82. (Procession, Andong). Thus they entered the town, still in file, wearing their horsehair hats with dignity; the men of the great clans of Andong Kim (once the most powerful in the land), Andong Chang and Andong Kwun.
83. (Yi Taejo). The highest authority of all in Confucianism under the nebulous mandate of heaven, was the throne. This is the ancestral portrait of Yi Taejo, founder of the Yi dynasty in 1392. The pinnacle of the five Confucian relationships is the relationship of obedience of the subject to the King and does much to explain the powerful role assumed by and granted to the head of state even today.
84. (Tablet house). The Yi family ruled Korea for 500 years, down into the 20th century. Its home was Chonju, in southwest Korea, where the family tablet house still stands.
85. (Three Yi). Once a year the head of the Yi family, who is now Mr. Yi Kyu, last royal prince of the dynasty and son of the late Crown Prince, together with the heads of the Yi Dynasty Association, make a ceremonial visit to the family shrine to honor the founder of the line, Yi Taejo.
86. (Kneeling). They kneel at the entrance, then proceed in to bow before the tablet of his grandfather (some 27 generations removed).
87. Yi tablets). These are clan tablets and this is a family duty.
88. (Chong-myong). The royal tablets of the same reigning family are housed on a grander scale in the tablet shrine of the Changdok Palace in Seoul. The main building contains rooms for the tablets of kings who bore direct heirs to the throne. Each king's room contains his tablet, his seal and his favorite books.
89. (Tables). Once a year the tablets are venerated with memorial honors. Ceremonial vessels are placed before the 19 shrines, all built in 1395 at the beginning of the Yi dynasty.

90. (Kings). On the left, in this picture taken about 1905, are the last three kings of the dynasty. And it makes me wonder a little about the power of Korean geomancers and their claims to foresee the future, to note that in 1970 when the last crown prince was posthumously made king and the dynasty came to an end, it had produced exactly 19 kings with direct heirs, one for each of the cubicles built 600 years before.

91. (Yi Kyu). Here, Mr. Yi Kyu, the son of that last king who never ruled, officiates at the royal ceremony, not just as head of the family, as in the rites at Chonju, but representing in the old Confucian pattern, the entire nation.

92. (Burning prayers). And when it is all over, attendants send official messages to the spirits of the kings, burning them in this container so that the smoke will ascend to heaven, informing the royal ancestors that the rites have been properly observed for another year, and they may rest in peace so that the kingdom, too, may have peace.

93. (Kneeling). Twice a year at the Confucian Temple on the campus of the old Confucian University in Seoul (Songgyun'gwan) another rare ceremony may be seen: the spring and autumn rites, the sacrifice to Confucius on the ancestor-worshipping day (sangjong-il) of the 2nd and 8th lunar months.

94. (Dance). Nowhere else in the world today can you see the old Confucian rituals and dances performed so authentically, the traditions handed down for centuries. Students perform the stylized civil and military dances, wearing black hats as civil officials, and red ones as military.

95. (Elders). Then a group of chosen elders - heads of clans or government officials - file slowly in to the temple. They enter the sacred place to offer the sacrifices of wine and food before "the five holy ones" - Confucius and his four major disciples: (Mencius, Szu-tsu, Tseng-tsu and Yuen-tsu).

96. (Tosan). Confucian thought reached its apex in the 16th century in the writing of Yi T'oegye (1501-70). His school and study are still preserved as a national shrine in Tosan, just outside of Andong.

97. (Woodblock). In his debates with other scholars (notably Yi I, or "Yulgok"), this great Confucian thinker wrestled with the doctrine of the yi and the ki, the two cosmic forces of the universe, which could be termed, perhaps, roughly parallel to theological debate on the relationship of matter and spirit. In reaching his own conclusions he came closer to a doctrine of a personal God than any Confucian scholar before or since. But, as always in Confucianism, the ethical dimension remained primary. This is a print from a woodblock rubbing of his own calligraphy. It could be translated "Even when alone be circumspect", or paraphrased, "Think no evil".

98. (Song Si-Ryol). But the downfall of Confucianism was its factionalism. This poor gentleman, Song Si Ryol, was a loser. A rival school trapped him into a debate over the length of the proper period of mourning for a dowager queen. They said 27 months. He said 12 was enough. And for this patent disrespect to royalty he was banished from the court.

99. (Yoju shrine). Eventually he was forced to commit suicide, and his lonely shrine near Yoju mourns his downfall and stands as a symbol of the end of Confucian power.

SHAMANISM

100. (Cheju-do spirit stone). Korea has never been completely satisfied either by the clear, cold inadequacies of Confucianism or the warmer mists of Buddhism. She has always turned, unfulfilled and a little embarrassed to something darker and more primitive...

101. (Female posts). ...like these female spirit posts guarding a village. The characters read: "The great female general of all under the earth."

102. (Male posts). Across the road stands a row of male spirit posts, "the great general of all under the heavens." These symbols of the spirits, reenforced by shamanism, represent, I am convinced, the core of the Korean religious mind.

103. (Spirit tree). Its roots are animistic--a belief in the supernatural powers of natural things. Trees, for instance. It doesn't take much imagination to see the spirit writhing to get out of this gnarled old trunk.

104. (Straw rope). To keep him in, and protect the nearby village, the local people have thrown a straw rope around the whole grove.

105. (Fishing village). Fishing villages are particularly superstitious. Their frail boats are vulnerable to the mighty forces of nature, the power of wind and wave.

106. (Entrance). So this fishing village protects itself with both a spirit tree and a demon post to guard the entrance into town.

107. (Post). Usually a new spirit post is erected each year and placed next to the older ones. But this one must be particularly powerful. It has obviously suffered from years of exposure but stands guard year after year.

108. (Fetish). But animistic fears are not limited to the villages. I picked up this spirit fetish on a major street just outside metropolitan Seoul. It is a charm to rid the house of disease, made in the image of a sick child to tempt the spirit out of the human body and into the doll. Often paper money is tucked into the straw. Then the doll is thrown out into the street in the hope that someone more greedy for money than fearful of the spirit, will pick up both the doll and the spirit causing the disease.

109. (Crown). From beggars to kings, few in Korea have been untouched by the primitive emotions of animistic Shamanism. Art historians, studying the great gold crowns of ancient Silla, with their suggestions of antler horns and totems, theorize that the first kings may have been glorified tribal shamans.

110. (Spirit walk). Even the royal tombs of the Yi dynasty, Confucian though it was, have their spirit walks, so that the royal spirits may come in dignity from their graves to the shrines below and taste the offerings.

111. (3 panels). Buddhism is even more infiltrated with shamanist practices than Confucianism. Here is a corner of a Buddhist temple, but not one of these pictures is Buddhist. They are all shamanist, tainted with Taoism. The one on the left is the shrine of the Seven Stars; the one on the right is the shrine of the Lonely Sage, and in the center, is the strongly animist shrine of the Old Man of the Mountain.

112. (Doksong). Doksong, the Lonely Sage, is the spirit much loved by school boys and politicians. He has power to help pass examinations and rise to high office.

113. (Mountain god). But the most powerful symbol of victory over evil spirits is the tiger. The most popular spot in every Buddhist temple is the shrine of the mountain god, who always has a tiger by his side. He is the spirit of the hills behind the village and the temple. He knows the people and their needs. And the people feel they know him.

114. (Mountain god shrine). Sometimes this Old Man of the Mountain even has a separate building on the temple compound all to himself. If you ask why he is more popular than the Buddha, perhaps it is because the Buddha seems remote. After all, he was a foreigner. He was Indian. But the Old Man of the Mountain is strictly local.

115. (Worshiper). So it is to the Old Man of the Mountain that the women pray for sons, lighting the candles and lifting their arms in earnest prayers.

116. (Red dirt-close-up). There are small spirits, too, that run along the ground. And they must also be reckoned with. Around this Buddhist temple at regular intervals, little mounds of red earth have been placed.

117. (Dirt mounds). These little mounds of dirt keep out the irritating mischievous spirits that creep up on you, blow dust in the priests eyes, and disturb meditations. They also cause itching and overturn pots and pans.

118. (Buddha & turtle). In the village, where life is really lived, the Buddha shrinks drastically in size, and is completely overwhelmed by the spirits. In the temples, Buddha is large and serene and golden. But here he is overshadowed by the spirit of the turtle, which brings long life. The religion of the people is not really Buddhism, it is animistic-shamanism.

119. (Well shrine). I am not even sure that this is a Buddha at all by the village well. Larger and cruder behind the little image loom the tiger, his white teeth gleaming at the left, and the snake (or dragon) beneath him, and a fierce god with a long white sword, and the turtle, again, on the right. These are the gods the villagers understand.

120. (Rock pile). There seems to be a special affinity between the spirits and rocks. The higher the stones can be piled without falling, the nearer the prayers come to the spirits whom the worshippers seek.

121. (Rock shrine). One of the most elaborate spirit rock shrines in all Korea, I think, is this at the base of Horse Ear Mountain (Ma-i-san), near Chonju in the southwest. A man gave his entire adult life to the building of ever higher prayer spires to impress the spirits.

122. (Mudang). But the heart of Korea's folk religion revolves not around the rocks, but around the sorceress (mudang) - the specially chosen one who has established a personal relationship with the world of the spirits.

123. (Shaman dwelling). The shaman mudangs have no settled site or temple for their ceremonies, but they may have altars in their homes. The flag proclaims this low shack in front to be a sorceress's home. We were amused by the legend on the flag. Today even mudangs must be relevant: the characters on the flag read: "Anti-communist spiritual association".

124. (Altar). More often the mudangs go where they are called, setting up their altars and performing their ceremonies in homes, in boats or in neighborhoods to ward off or drive off unwanted and malevolent spirits. Or, as here, to call down good spirits at the ground-breaking for a new house about 100 yards away from our home. Note the pig's head in the center of the table.

125. (Kyeryong-san flags). Usually the ceremonies are for individuals or single families. Sometimes, though, a Kut will be held for the whole village. Once a year at Sindo-an, at the foot of the sacred mountain, Kyeryongsan, a whole coven of mudangs gather under their flags and poles for a feverish, mass ceremony of whirling dances and incantations.

126. (Dragon flag). No one dares to touch the flags, which are left flapping forlornly in the breeze all year until the next kut. But we brought one home. And it carried with it such associations of power and fear that even a Christian cleaning woman was afraid of it.

127. (Kut crowd). One day, visiting a resettlement area, I came upon this crowd gathering around the beginning of a shamanist kut, a special one as it turned out: the initiation ceremony of a new mudang (sorceress).

128. (Mudang). The girl in the red robes had apparently been sick and delirious. This is often taken to be the sign of special calling to the profession of the sorceress. As she recovers, she is brought out and dressed in the red robes of the mudang.

129. (Pine branch). A pine branch is placed in her hand. An assistant beats the cymbals incessantly, calling the spirits and inducing the trance. A tremor moves through the body of the girl, and the branch begins to shake. This is the sign that the spirit has come. Then the mudang begins to dance uncontrollably. She has been swept into her association with the spirit world.

130. (Hut). Afterward she is led into the rude little shack for more of the initiation ceremony, too secret for explanation to outsiders.

131. (Fortune teller). There is a whole world of semi-religious practices and beliefs more or less related to the underlying animistic-shamanism of Korea. Fortune telling, for example, only distantly relates itself to the powers of the spirit world, but the connection is there. This practitioner stresses more the significance of the shape of the face and head as he tells an inquirer what kind of young woman he should look for for a propitious marriage.

132. (2nd fortune teller). Others may deal with the power of written characters, as in a name; or look to the stars that shape an individual's fortune from the moment of birth. This, perhaps, is not unlike the common folk religion in America.

133. (Symbol). Beneath it all is the deeply-held belief that unseen spiritual and cosmic forces of the universe are always at work, exerting their arcane influences on human fate. When properly balanced, as in this symbol of the triune harmony of heaven, earth and the human spirit, then all is well and one is physically and spiritually at peace.

134. (Book of Changes--Yok-kyong). The balancing interplay of these mysterious powers, (Um and Yang), is most definitively, but most ambiguously described in the Book of Changes (called I Ching in Chinese). It is one of the five famous Confucian classics. "I wish I could live 50 more years", Confucius said at the end of his life. "I would spend them studying the Book of Changes." A strange fascination he had with a book of magic; for, essentially this book is a fortune-telling manual.

135. (Seal). Whether studied by philosophers or misused by shamans, the Book of Changes is one of the most influential books ever written. My husband counts among his treasures this copy owned by a famous 18th-century Korean scholar, Chung Yak-Jong. But look again at his personal seal. This man, a member of one of the greatest families of Confucian scholars Korea ever produced, was brought to the Christian faith by early Roman Catholic missionaries. His conversion cost him his life. He was beheaded in 1801, one of the first Christian martyrs in Korea.

And that marked the beginning of a new faith in Korea, yet older than all the others in its roots. But that is another story - and one I'm even more eager to tell you!

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF MISSION

(Introduction)

I'd like to begin by turning to the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, verses 3 through 9. Let's read it together:

"A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they had not much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched; and since they had no root they withered away. Other seeds fell upon thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Those who have ears, let them hear."

This parable illustrates the importance of the religious context of mission. When you sow the seed of the gospel, pay attention to where it's falling. Remember that there are different kinds of grounds, some much better prepared to receive the seed and bear fruit than others. It helps in mission as much as in farming to pay attention to where you are sowing and also to know something about soil-testing and soil improving. Careful methods and thoughtful planning alone, though, will not produce fruit in Christian mission any more than wise farming methods can produce grain apart from God's provision and His power. But it does please the Lord, I believe, that we make use of human wisdom and Biblical common sense while sowing the seed of the Gospel, cultivating the soil and waiting upon the Spirit of God.

The soil of human minds and societies is often referred to as a world and life view. That means a pattern of ideas, influences and circumstances which shape people's outlook on life. The worldview which I am going to introduce to you through these slides is that of the old traditional religious mind of Korea into which the new seed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was planted by early Korean Christians and by missionaries. The three identifiable elements in it are Buddhism, Confucianism and

Shamanism. Remember that this does not represent modern Korea or the Korean Christian worldview. Even so, it is well to keep in mind that the longer a pattern of thought and custom has molded a people's character, the longer that pattern resists flattening and continues to make an observable impact upon the people's life.

There is a watershed, though, between the old and the new. It is written about the early Church in the West that, however morally sickening and disappointing were some aspects of its nascent life, still the leaders of the Church had what neither Cicero nor Marcus Aurelius possessed - they had actually seen God in the face of Jesus Christ as forgiving and redeeming love. Much remained unchanged in their views of life and the world. Heathenism reasserted itself in saintly mythology and magic sacramentarianism; human nature imperfectly sanctified, even by that vision gave room for pride and hate and fear and bigotry. But for all that, no evil could quite hide the shining of the faces of those who had seen God in pity and compassion, and these became the messengers of redeeming grace.¹

How true that is in Korea, as well. But what I'm going to show you here, is the old cultural soil before the new seed was planted.

¹ Hall, Thomas Cuming, "History of Ethics Within Organized Christianity", N.Y., Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1910, p. 204.

